

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A composition for stabilizing the nucleic acids of at least one cell in a specimen at ambient temperature, said composition being comprised of:

- (a) a first substance capable of precipitating or denaturing proteins, comprising at least one alcohol or ketone whose concentration is less than 80% of the total composition; and
- (b) ~~a second facilitator substance not chemically related to said first substance to aid in the infusion of the first substance into at least one cell~~ dimethyl sulfoxide whose concentration is greater than 20% of the total composition,

wherein the concentrations of said first ~~and second~~ substances and dimethyl sulfoxide are effective to stabilize the nucleic acids of said at least one cell in a specimen at ambient temperature, and further wherein the combined concentration of said first ~~and second~~ substances and dimethyl sulfoxide is 100% of said composition.

2. (Original) The composition of Claim 1 wherein said at least one alcohol or ketone is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, butanol and acetone.

3. (Cancelled)

4. The composition of Claim 1 wherein said first substance is comprised of one alcohol or ketone.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) The composition of Claim 1 wherein said first substance is comprised of a first alcohol or ketone and a second alcohol or ketone.

7. (Currently Amended) The composition of Claim 6 wherein said concentrations of said first ~~and second~~ substances and dimethyl sulfoxide in said composition are in a ratio of

2.5:2.5:5 (first alcohol or ketone : second alcohol or ketone : ~~second substance~~ dimethyl sulfoxide).

8. (Currently Amended) The composition of Claim 4 wherein said concentrations of said first ~~and second substances~~ and dimethyl sulfoxide in said composition are in a ratio of 1:1 (first substance : second substance).

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The composition of Claim 7 wherein said first alcohol or ketone is methanol, said second alcohol or ketone is ethanol ~~and said second substance is dimethyl sulfoxide~~.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The composition of Claim 8 wherein said first substance is methanol ~~and said second substance is dimethyl sulfoxide~~.

13. (Original) The composition of Claim 1 wherein said nucleic acid is DNA.

14. (Original) The composition of Claim 1 wherein said nucleic acid is RNA.

15. (Original) The composition of Claim 14 wherein said RNA is ribosomal RNA.

16. (Original) The composition of Claim 1 wherein said at least one cell is a prokaryote or eukaryote.

17. (Original) The composition of Claim 1 wherein said at least one cell is a microorganism.